

Agri-Brexit Coalition Meeting

The Farmers Club
Committee Room
3 Whitehall Court
London
SW1A 2EL

27 March 2019

Attendees

David Caffall (Chair)	(AIC)
Robert Sheasby	(AIC)
Paul Rooke	(AIC)
Stephen Howarth	(AEA)
Sarah Mukherjee	(CPA)
Sarah Nightingale	(Gafta – for Jaine Chisholm Caunt)
Geoff Dodgson	(for AIC)
Jill Hewitt	(NAAC)
Grace O’Gorman	(NOAH – for Dawn Howard)

Guests

Robin Manning	(DEFRA)
Chris Kearney	(DEFRA)
Katie Doherty	(IMTA)

Apologies

Penny Maplestone	(BSPB)
Jeremy Moody	(CAAV)

1. Introductions and Apologies

David welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming, particularly Katie Doherty from IMTA and Grace O’Gorman who was standing in for Dawn Howard of NOAH

2. Brexit – where are we?

Robin gave the Coalition an update – as we know the situation is very fluid and changing rapidly.

Brexit is now delayed until 12 April at the earliest depending on whether there is a deal or no deal. Prior to 12 April a series of votes will take place and those which attract the most support will be discussed further next week. Option to ask Brussels for a further extension to 29 May

A third meaningful vote is due tomorrow but it is likely that there is still not enough votes to get it through – currently no obvious majority around anything

Tariffs have now been discussed and agreed for the most part although a few sectors still have to be agreed (i.e. egg sector). There is currently no review mechanism in place for changes to Tariffs.

Regardless of the situation Defra are still working hard to ensure everything carries on as it currently is as well as trying to look forward.

SCOFA Committee has met to discuss the UK's Third-country application for authorisation to trade. A decision is imminent and will come into place by the Brexit date, if there is no agreement with the EU, to allow for a seamless trade transition. NZ and Canada both keen to work with the UK and trade agreements are underway

Currently no change regarding FEP – this was due to commence 1 April but will now be pushed back. There is a central team in government working on a 'no deal' situation but this can be moved seamlessly back to FEP if required.

Robin said that Defra were as prepared as they could be and asked if there was anything particular that we needed from Defra. Sarah M asked for more information on the tariffs and how the figures were arrived at. Robin will find out and feed back **ACTION : RM**

If we have any further queries or issues to be resolved, Robin asked that we raise them quickly – either via him or to the hotline of the Enhanced Policy Liaison Committee. Sarah M commented that the CPA have also set up a hotline for their members.

Robert asked whether the tariff implementation would be temporary and Robin confirmed that it was only due to be in place for 12 months. This will be frequently monitored and tariffs adjusted if and when required. Robin also asked for working level intelligence (i.e. Coalition members) and to flag any concerns they may have or are made aware of by members

Sarah N asked whether longer term tariffs will be correlated to the FEP but Robin said that this would depend on where we are longer term. David commented that we would need clarity in this as it is important for many of our members as to when things are likely to happen; what is the process and the trigger points?

David suggested that the Coalition members gave Robin a brief update on where their organisations currently are with Brexit

- AEA Members are concerned with being able to obtain stocks, parts etc
- AIC Concerns around Fertiliser Sector tariffs and some other issues. Concerns regarding import and export of grain. Feeling that many members may still not be prepared for what is to come
- CPA Sarah M commented that many of their members are large global companies and we shouldn't assume that they will be making chemicals just for the UK market as a 4th trading member. A lot has been imported in advance and come in early. This is now sat in bonded warehouses at a huge additional cost.
- GAFTA Sarah N commented that they are an international organisation so didn't have any pressing concerns as they are more globally focussed. As Sarah will no longer be at Gafta from the end of March, Jaime will hope to attend the meetings going forward and will be better placed to comment at the next meeting.
- NAAC General feeling that their members are unwilling to talk about it– they are finding it difficult to plan for. Labour is a concern as many agri workers are European
- NOAH Their main concern had been vet meds and logistics, however after working closely with Defra and VMD it has been agreed that vet meds will have special import dispensations and will be allowed to travel into the country on government ships. There are still concerns around regulation.
- IMTA Members have concerns around tariffs, freight forwarding, testing, etc. There have been some glitches found in i-path – ideally would need to be able to override or have a manual system as back up. Several queries sent by IMTA to HMRC in February, still have yet to be responded to. TSP giving concerns around tariffs,

Healthmark and ID codes – still no clarification on what these should read, and their complete inflexibility

Robin thanked everyone for sharing their concerns and agreed with all. He is aware that some are currently being worked on and others are still yet to be done. We need further clarity from the commission regarding goods in the market over the Brexit period. There is a lot of confusion and a great deal of lost business opportunities as people don't know what they are supposed to be doing.

Robin and Chris left the meeting but prior to that commented that they are very happy to be involved in the Coalition and would like to remain so going forward. The Coalition thanked them for attending and agreed that we were most grateful for their involvement and input.

3. APWG

David gave an update on the APWG. Peter Kendall has put the group together. AIC is speaking for Agri-Brexit Coalition, however APWG still hasn't contacted any of the Coalition for any input, as David had again discussed with them, but which seems to have fallen on deaf ears. There appears to be a lack of interest in collaborating more widely

AHDB are very keen to promote 'What works' – AIC are happy with this although with some strong reservations about Governance.

Robert has spoken with the 'Skills' subgroup and will meet with Don Curry/Helen Woolley to find out further details. Jill asked if Robert would share her contact details with the group as this group would fall well for NAAC. **ACTION: RS**

Sarah M expressed concern by the lack of engagement of several groups. RS suggested we invite Helen Woolley to a future meeting to discuss a wider skills framework before the groups go too much further.

4. Future of the Coalition

Further to previous discussions it was again confirmed that the group wished to transition in to a new form post Brexit and, as Robin confirmed at the meeting, Defra are also still very keen to remain involved in whatever format the group takes. Happy for the meetings to remain in London.

David discussed that as a group we remain a Coalition in the agri-supply industry and hence the suggested new name of Agri Supply Coalition. Jill and Sarah M stated as they hadn't been at the previous meeting they hadn't had time to consider the name but both agreed they would prefer the word Services or Trade rather than Supply. After due consideration and further discussion they agreed that they would be happy with Agri Supply Coalition. We will still need agreement from Jaine and Jeremy and Robert/Geoff will contact them both to discuss. **ACTION: RS**

5. Any other business

Sarah M invited the Coalition members to the CPA AGM which will be held in May and asked anyone interested to contact her for details.

Paul met with the Agri Food Chain Business Group last week – but there was little new to report. Paul had been unable to attend the Defra Agri Business Supply Group meeting last week and asked Katie for any pertinent points. She promised that she would share her minutes with the Coalition. **ACTION: KD (done)**

As it was Sarah N's last meeting David gave a vote of thanks from the Coalition, for her enthusiasm and intellect in her participation of our meetings. She will be much missed! Sarah thanked David for his words and wished the Coalition well

Sarah N commented that as GAFTA had resigned from Tim Morden's group there would be a vacant seat which NAAC could potentially fill. Jill to follow up

Dates of the Coalition meetings to the end of the year are as follows, and will all be held at The Farmers Club

- 24 April
- 14 June
- 26 July
- 4 September
- 16 October
- 4 December